



For Immediate Release

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Thursday, July 26, 2007

***ENZI CALLS ON SENATE LEADERS TO NAME CONFEREES
FOR CRITICAL DRUG SAFETY LEGISLATION***

Washington D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) urging them to move forward on critical drug safety legislation.

Enzi called on Senator Reid and Senator McConnell to appoint conferees to finalize S. 1082, the "Food and Drug Administration Revitalization Act."

"We must think carefully about our priorities for the limited time we have before the recess begins, and take strong action to give the FDA the resources and tools it needs to protect us," Enzi wrote. "Appointing conferees now would send a powerful message that Congress is working as hard as FDA is to make these programs work."

S. 1082 renews user fee programs at FDA that fund the review of new drugs and medical devices. The programs expire in September. The bill also provides much-needed drug safety reform to help FDA ensure that drugs and devices Americans rely on are safe and effective.

"As you know, this work period is nearly over," Enzi wrote. "If the drug and device user fee programs are not renewed prior to the recess, FDA will have no choice but to send what is known as a 'Reduction In Force' or layoff notice to hundreds of FDA employees involved in these programs. These highly skilled and dedicated public servants are not likely to wait until Congress musters enough interest to act to maintain the user fee programs. They will find other jobs. A staff exodus would be a disaster for this agency, and for the public health it safeguards so zealously."

COPY OF THE LETTER FOLLOWS

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

<http://help.senate.gov>

July 27, 2007

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
361-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid and Senator McConnell:

I urge you to appoint conferees as soon as possible to S. 1082, a bill that renews expiring authorities at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as well as reforms our drug safety system.

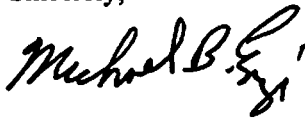
Every day, we hear about a new problem the FDA faces in protecting our health. From contaminated seafood to tainted toothpaste, this agency is in dire need of Congressional support to carry out its mission. Reauthorizing these programs is critical to ensure that new drugs and medical devices reach the patients who need them.

As you know, this work period is nearly over. If the drug and device user fee programs are not renewed prior to the recess, FDA will have no choice but to send what is known as a "Reduction In Force" or layoff notice to hundreds of FDA employees involved in these programs. These highly skilled and dedicated public servants are not likely to wait until Congress musters enough interest to act to maintain the user fee programs. They will find other jobs. A staff exodus would be a disaster for this agency, and for the public health it safeguards so zealously.

This comprehensive bill will provide new authorities for FDA to be able to react in a timely way to any safety problems that arise after a drug has been brought to market. FDA needs these tools both to get drugs to the market quickly and efficiently and to respond to potential problems the same way, especially when lives are on the line and people need new drugs and therapies.

We must think carefully about our priorities for the limited time we have before the recess begins, and take strong action to give the FDA the resources and tools it needs to protect us. Appointing conferees now would send a powerful message that Congress is working as hard as FDA is to make these programs work.

Sincerely,



Michael B. Enzi
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions